

# **Town of Bar Harbor Cruise Ship Task Force**

## **Meeting minutes**

**November 30, 2007**

**8:30 AM**

**Council Chambers, Municipal Building**

**93 Cottage Street, Bar Harbor**

*Members in attendance: Charlie Phippen, Nathan Young, Paul Paradis, Fred Cook, Mary Opdyke, Amy Powers, Greg Veilleux, Robert Bahr, Greg Gordon, Chris Fogg, Anne Krieg*

*Also in attendance was Liz Weston from Acadia National Park, Betty Massie of MDI Tours*

*Absent from the meeting was George Seavey*

*The meeting began with introductions.*

Anne Krieg, Planning Director and staff to the Task Force, reviewed the bylaws of the Task Force, focusing on the Purpose and Goals of the group. She then asked the task force to discuss possible methods for the process of reviewing analyzing and making recommendations on the study document.

Paul Paradis requested a map of the area be brought to the meetings.

Greg Gordon noted the document has levels of recommendations. The Task Force could look at which items are simplest to implement and that are agreeable to most. The more challenging or those items that take more time could be tabled to future meetings. He also rose a point about the timing of any changes as to what season it would affect.

*The group was agreeable for the first exercise to evaluate the table of recommendations and establish priorities for each item.*

Amy Powers brought copies of the document called "Tourism Best Management Practices" from Juneau, Alaska. She discussed the work she had led in 2004 to educate the community on this model. She noted a need to gauge success on implementation steps and to seek agreement with the industry.

There was discussion on how tours not associated with the cruise ship industry affect the work of the task force. It was generally agreed that they need attention as part of the work but the task force would stay with their goals as outlined in their bylaws. It was noted that recommendations to Council in the future could include other tasks associated with this use.

The Task Force elected unanimously the following people as their officers:

***Paul Paradis – Chair***

***Chris Fogg – Vice Chair***

***Anne Krieg – Secretary***

The agenda was adopted with no changes.

The Task Force generally discussed items in the Study.

***It was agreed to use the table at the end of the study to guide the work of the Task Force. The next meeting would be dedicated to establishing priorities from this table.***

Charlie Phippen indicated the Study reflects the staff comments made during the process.

There was discussion on timing, that is, what season will be influenced by the work of this task force. Charlie Phippen indicated he has not yet received reservation for 2010. He noted he can tell the companies that the rules and fees may be subject to change from the work of this task force. He also noted he has been receiving reservations for 2009. He typically receives reservation 18 months in advance at times. He does not take yacht reservations until after January 1. It was noted that no deposit is required for reservations. Many in the group indicated the task force should not be stymied nor rushed due to timing.

***The group decided to meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday, starting in 2008.*** The December schedule for the remainder of 2007 would be ***December 6<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup>*** to accommodate school vacation. ***A calendar of dates was requested for the next meeting for the group to ratify.***

There was a discussion on using Seatrade as a venue to let the industry know what we are working on with this project. Amy Powers indicated her role on the task force is to let the industry know what is happening with this project.

Amy Powers discussed the markets in the cruise ship industry. The reduced value of the dollar in other countries has caused the domestic trips to be of better value for US travelers as well as for European travelers coming here.

Greg Gordon noted a concern that there are many other ports competing with us. He is concerned if we make too many changes, we may lose our standing in the market.

Amy Powers discussed the Rockland plan to try to compete with Bar Harbor.

Chief Young noted that we have to justify our fee structure; that the charge covers our costs or the funds will go to improvements for the use.

Bob Bahr noted the budget process sets the fees through the Town Council. He also expressed a concern that the task force remain on task with their discussions.

***The Chair opened the meeting up to public comment.***

Liz Weston from Acadia National Park opined that the fee should address impacts to the Town. She questioned what is the point where too many visitors degrade the overall visitor experience. She felt the reason why the cruise ships come here is not because of our fee structure but in part because of the Park.

Amy Powers added that there are accessibility issues that affect the visitor experience. There is a lot of pressure on the season because it is short. She noted the comments from passengers they have surveyed were in regards to the boarding and clearance requirements. There are a multitude of delays for people disembarking and boarding to see local sites. This delay can also affect the tour schedules on land.

***The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 AM.***

***Minutes prepared by Anne Krieg, Planning Director***